



---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 24, 2007**

**Contact:** Halle Czechowski

[czechowski@voices.org](mailto:czechowski@voices.org)

202-289-0777 x211

**Voices for America's Children Commends Agriculture Committee for Making  
Child Nutrition A Priority in the Farm Bill**

WASHINGTON, DC— At a press conference with House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN), Members of the House Agriculture Committee, and the coalition of farm, conservation, nutrition, and community groups working to advance the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, the President and CEO of Voices for America's Children, Bill Bentley, released the followed statement:

"35 million Americans, nearly 12 million of whom are children, cannot consistently afford enough to eat. A deeply troubling statistic and one likely to worsen. Last year, real wages for low-income workers were still below 2001 levels; this year, the economy is slowing and prices are on the rise. The Food Stamp Program is an important resource in the fight to end child hunger. Currently, the average benefit level for Food Stamps is valued at \$1 per person per meal. We can and must do better for the nation's children and families. This year Congress has an opportunity to make real progress in this fight by including a strong nutrition title in the reauthorization of the Farm Bill; Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the House Agriculture Committee have stepped up to meet that challenge.

I commend Chairman Peterson and the Members of Agriculture Committee for addressing the persistent issue of child hunger by increasing the minimum benefit and raising and indexing the minimum standard deduction. The measure also strengthens outreach, eligibility, and enrollment processes to capture families that are eligible for assistance but are not currently enrolled; expands the asset test so that families are not penalized for saving for their children's future; and streamlines paperwork and face-to-face meeting requirements. By their actions they have not only made the health and good nutrition of children a national priority, they have recognized that nutrition is a critical building block issue, one which if addressed lays the groundwork for a better childhood and the ability to grow into a productive adult with the capacity to reach their full potential.

Other critical provisions for children include: increased funding for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, which provides fresh produce to schools; expansion of the USDA Snack Program, which encourages and assists schools in providing healthy snacks to students during after-school activities and expands the program to all 50 states; and creates a demonstration project to evaluate the strategies for addressing the obesity public health crisis in low-income communities.

In a unanimous vote, the House Agriculture Committee has proven themselves to be children's champions. We encourage the full Congress to follow their lead."

###

*Voices for America's Children (Voices) is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit child advocacy organization committed to speaking out for the well-being of children at the local, state and federal levels of government. With more than 50 members in nearly every state, as well as the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands, we advocate for effective public policies in order to improve the lives of all children throughout the United States. For more information, please visit Voices' Web site at [www.voices.org](http://www.voices.org).*